

D R A F T

8 Dec 58

Ltr fr Mr Root to Gen Schriever

This letter confirms and extends to some extent the remarks I recently made to you. It has become relatively common knowledge in portions of industry that the reconnaissance system proposed for Sentry involves the transmission by electrical means of information collected by a relatively long lived satellite. In general, it has not (been) difficult to deduce the time scales involved and the period within which we would have programmed a significant capability.

As a result of the above situation and as a result of the DISCOVERER announcement, we have been approached, rather privately, by a couple of concerns who would like to provide satellite payloads consisting of recoverable cameras. The basic notion is that they can fill a gap prior to the time at which the data-link system can be operational. They speak of other advantages which they believe attractive as well.

NRO review(s) completed.

As you will immediately recognize, these proposals bear a resemblance to the spin-camera program which was cancelled in March of 1958. However, these new proposals do present somewhat different and possibly more attractive capabilities. In all cases they are linked to a Thor-boosted capability since we have made the companies concerned realize that an Atlas-boosted operational capability prior to the regularly programmed data-link system is out of the question.

As I have indicated previously, I would like to have your general reaction to these kinds of proposals.